

# Guelph Trail Master Plan update

## Summary of what we heard - Phase 3

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### Introduction

The third round of public engagement for the Guelph Trail Master Plan (GTMP) update took place November 24-December 22, 2020. The goal of this round of engagement was to get feedback on the proposed trail classifications, learn which proposed trails the public sees as priorities and to hear about the experience of people using Guelph's trails during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, engagement took place entirely online on the City's 'Have Your Say' engagement platform and virtual public and stakeholder meetings. Both forms of engagement were communicated through a public notice, roadside and trail signs, the City's website, ads in the local newspaper and on the City's social media channels.

### Have Your Say engagement platform

During the engagement period, following participation was recorded:

- 1,249 aware participants – visited at least one page
- 701 informed participants – viewed multiple pages, downloaded a document, or contributed to a feedback tool
- 125 engaged participants – contributed idea, stories, asked questions, or placed pins on the interactive map

### Discussion forums

There were three discussion forums created to allow for a conversation around the topics of trail surfaces, the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) route and the proposed trail classifications.

#### Trail surfaces

There were 56 contributors to the conversation about trail surfaces. Contributors shared their opinions and experiences with different trail surface types. Many comments focused on a need for better winter maintenance regardless of the trail surface type.

Paved trails were preferred by some contributors for the following reasons:

- Enable winter snow clearing allowing people to use the trails all year
- Allow for people with disabilities to easily use trails
- Soft surface and granular trails are not as enjoyable to use and cause wear and tear on many types of bicycles
- Stone dust trails become mucky in winter and spring

Soft surface, granular and natural trails were preferred by contributors for the following stated reasons:

- Slows “speedy” cyclists
- Better drainage of rainwater
- Easier on joints
- Paved trails have higher cost
- Lower environmental impact

### **Trans Canada Trail (TCT) route investigation**

There were 14 contributors who commented on the Trans Canada Trail (TCT) route. Contributors all agreed that closing the gap is a major priority for connecting the TCT and Goderich to Guelph (G2G) trails, and that the least preferable route option would be along Silvercreek/County Road 39. Contributors also noted a lack of signs for the trail, or trail detours makes using the TCT and G2G confusing.

### **Trail classification**

There were three contributors to the trail classification idea page. One contributor felt that the proposed trail classification made sense providing options for active transportation and natural surface recreational trails. Another respondent wanted a classification system that more closely follows road classifications with names such as “Tier 1, Tier 2” to make it clearer which trail type it is.

### **Trail map**

The public could add general comments at specific pinned locations on an interactive map, as well as specific pins for comments relating to trail crossings and trail connectivity. There were 290 comments on the interactive trail map.

Most comments identified locations where respondents would like to see new trails or trail improvements. Approximately 40 of these comments focused on third-party trails. Many comments focused on specific areas of Guelph, such as Dolime (25 comments), the Guelph Innovation District (GID) (21 comments) and the Speedvale underpass (9 comments). Many comments highlighted respondents’ priorities for trail improvements.

Guelph staff and the consultant team have reviewed the comments and have identified feedback to be added into the GTMP as well as feedback to be considered for other plans such as the Transportation Master Plan or future work.

### **Stories about trail use during COVID-19**

There were 12 contributors to the stories section of the website, with stories about trail use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple stories highlighted the positive experience of using trails this past year as a way to get exercise, get around the city, and get to be in nature.

Many stories highlighted inaccessibility, lack of connectivity and barriers in the trail network. This includes a lack of curb cuts at trail crossings and stressful crossings at signalized and

uncontrolled crossings, noting the positive experience of continuous trails through grade-separated crossings instead.

Three stories highlighted the work that the Guelph Trail Hiking Club (GTHC) is doing with building and maintaining trails and the positive experience of volunteering with the group.

Other stories mentioned the need for trail features such as more benches, garbage cans, and trail lighting, the need to protect the natural heritage of the City and limit impact on natural spaces, and the need to have more connections and remove barriers to visiting Guelph Lake. Specific trail requests included completing the Eastview Circle to avoid the Eastview Road hill, and a trail behind Auden Road to Starwood Drive and link with the Laura Bailey Trail.

## Questions

There were eight questions submitted on the platform. Questions ranged in subject matter including:

- Wanting separation on trails between pedestrians and cyclists
- Pedestrian bridges across the Speed River to create complete loops (e.g., by the skate park)
- A trail in the Hyland/Elginfield/Glen Burnie area such as in Carter Park
- Concerns about use of electric-assist bicycles on trails
- Access to Guelph Lake
- Add lighting along the trail parallel to the Hanlon Highway in the Hanlon Creek Dog Park
- Why trail maps are not available online, and on the trail

## Stakeholder meetings

As part of the public engagement effort, the project team led engagement with the following stakeholder meetings:

- Trail user meeting (representatives from local trail groups) – December 8 at 6:30 p.m.
- [Natural Heritage Advisory Committee](#)– December 9 at 6:30 p.m.
- [Accessibility Advisory Committee](#)– December 22 at 3 p.m.

The minutes from these meetings are available on the City's website at [guelph.ca/trails](http://guelph.ca/trails).

## Correspondence from individuals and organizations

During the engagement period, the project team received email feedback from stakeholders including the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB), GTHC members, Up and Running Guelph, Terry Fox Run, the Yorklands Green Hub and members of the public. City staff responded directly to these emails.